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# THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE THOUGHT OF SAYYID QUṬB AS REFLECTED IN EARLIER AND LATER EDITIONS OF 'SOCIAL JUSTICE IN ISLAM'

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Through both his writings and his example as a martyr, the Egyptian activist and author Sayyid Quṭb (d. 1966) has become one of the better known representatives of the more radical tendencies in the contemporary "resurgence" of Islam. His later writings have been described as a charter for Islamic revolution and a major inspiration for extremist groups such as one responsible for the assassination of Anwar al-Sādāt in Egypt.[1] Quṭb came to his radical views relatively late in life, however, after having espoused more secularist views at an earlier stage. While considerable scholarly attention has been given to his later writings, relatively little attention has been given to his earlier writings and activities or to the transition from

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The following abbreviations are used in the footnotes:

A/1 = Quṭb, Sayyid, *Al-ᶜAdālah al-Ijtimāᶜiyyah fī al-Islām*, first ed., Cairo: Maktabat Miṣr, n.d. [1949].

A/2 = *Al-ᶜAdālah al-Ijtimāᶜiyyah fī al-Islām*, second ed., Cairo: Maktabat Miṣr, n.d.

A/3 = *Al-ᶜAdālah al-Ijtimāᶜiyyah fī al-Islām*, third ed., Cairo: Sharikat al-Tibāᶜah wa-l-Ṣaḥāfah li-l-Ikhwān al-Muslimīn, 1952.

A/7 = *Al-ᶜAdālah al-Ijtimāᶜiyyah fī al-Islām*, [seventh ed.], Cairo and Beirut: Dār al-Shurūq, 1394/1974.

*Khasaᵓis* = *Khaṣāᶜis al-Taṣawwur al-Islāmī wa-Muqawwimātuh* (*Characteristics and Components of the Islamic Conception*), eighth edition, Cairo and Beirut: Dar al-Shurūq, 1983/1403).

[1] See e.g.: Haddad, Y.Y., "Sayyid Quṭb: Ideologue of Islamic Revival", ch. 4 in *Voices of Resurgent Islam*, ed. J. Esposito, New York and Oxford: Oxford U.P., 1983; Haddad, Y.Y., "The Qurᵓanic Justification for an Islamic Revolution: The View of Sayyid Quṭb", *Middle East Journal* 37 (1983): 14–29; Kepel, Gilles, *Muslim Extremism in Egypt: The Prophet and the Pharaoh*, trans. J. Rothschild, Berkeley & Los Angeles, 1986, ch. 2; Sivan, Emmanuel, *Radical Islam: Medieval Theology and Modern Politics*, New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1985, chs. 2, 3.

his earlier to his later views.[2] I believe that an effort to understand how and why he moved from one position to another, and precisely what changes in his thinking were involved, would be very worth while. While the whole of such an effort is beyond the scope of this article, it does seek to make a small contribution in this direction.

Sayyid Quṭb was born about 1906 in a village in Asyut Province, Upper Egypt, into a landowning family which was both pious and touched by modern ways, and he appears to have been quite pious as a child.[3] His formal education was in the state-run schools, first in his village and then in Cairo, and eventually he attended Dār al-ʿUlūm (1929–1933), a school preparing Arabic language instructors that might be said to mediate between the world of the traditional Islamic sciences and that of modern secular learning. He then worked with the Ministry of Education for a number of years. During the 1930's he came under the influence of the liberal intellectuals of the time particularly ʿAbbās Maḥmūd al-ʿAqqād, and wrote a number of articles in the area of literary criticism as well as three novels, one of which was based on his village childhood experiences and another of which is generally thought to refer to an unhappy love affair of his.[4] During this period his ideological position might be described as nationalist and secularist; while not rejecting Islam as a religion he was not interested in applying it to all areas of life.[5]

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[2] My main secondary sources for Quṭb's earlier views have been: Muhammad Awwal Abubakar, *Sayyid Kutb: A Study of His Critical Ideas*. Master of Letters Thesis, University of Edinburgh, 1978, which deals with him as a literary critic; and Adnan Ayyub Musallam, *The Formative Stages of Sayyid Quṭb's Intellectual Career and His Emergence as an Islamic Daʿiyah*. Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Michigan, 1983, which covers the period up to about 1954, but not the later development, which is the primary concern of this paper.

[3] The following summary of Quṭb's life and work is based on Abubakar, *op. cit.*, Musallam, *op. cit.*, Haddad, "Sayyid Quṭb: Ideologue of Islamic Revival"; Sylvia G. Haim, "Sayyid Quṭb", *Asian and African Studies* 16 (1982): 147–156; Muḥammad Tawfīq Barakāt, *Sayyid Quṭb, Khulāṣat Ḥayātih, Minhajuh fī al-Ḥarakah, al-Naqd al-Muwajjah ilayh* (Beirut: Dār al-Daʿwah, n.d.), ch. 1.

[4] *Ṭifl min al-Qarya (Child from the Village)* and *Ashwāk (Thorns)*, respectively. Carré dates the first to 1946 and the second to 1947 (*Mystique et Politique*, Paris: Cerf, 1984, p. 227; cf. Haim, *op. cit.*, p. 149, for the first).

[5] According to Musallam he wanted to separate art from religion, though not from ethics (*op. cit.*, p. 155 *passim*). His political views may be seen in his response to Taha Husayn's *Mustaqbal al-Thaqāfah fī Miṣr* (*Future of Culture in Egypt*) (Quṭb's response was originally a series of articles in Ṣaḥīfat Dār al-ʿUlūm published shortly

In the 1940's he developed a greater concern for political and social-justice and also began to write on Islamic topics. The first major manifestations of the latter interest were his books, *Al-Taṣwīr al-Fannī fī al-Qurʾān (Artistic Portrayal in the Qurʾan)*, in which he approaches the Qurʾan, very appreciatively, as a literary critic, and *Mashāhid al-Qiyāmah fī al-Qurʾān (Scenes of the Resurrection in the Qurʾan)*.[6] His concern for political and social justice was manifested in a variety of activities, among them the editing of a journal, *Al Fikr al-Jadīd (New Thought)*, which was closed down when martial law was declared after the start of the war in Palestine in 1948. Late in 1948 he left Egypt for a visit to the United States that was to last for at least two years, officially to study U.S. systems of education although some claim that the trip was arranged by friends in the government to avoid his being arrested in Egypt.[7] By this time he had become sympathetic to the views of the Muslim Brethren (*Al-Ikhwān al-Muslimūn*), but had not joined them and was still prepared to cooperate with people of a more secularist orientation for common social and political goals.[8] The two concerns, for Islam and for justice, come together in his book, *Al-ʿAdālah al-Ijtimāʿiyyah fī al-Islām (Social Justice in Islam)*, which was completed shortly before he left for the U.S. and published the following year, 1949.[9] In this work

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after the appearance of Taha Husayn's book in 1938; it is available to me in book form as *Mustaqbal al-Thaqāfah fi Miṣr*, Jiddah: Al-Dār al-Saʿūdiyyah li-l-Nashr wa-l-Tawzīʿ, 1389/1969). Musallam indicates that he had religious doubts in the 1920's and 1930's but in *Mustaqbal al-Thaqafah fi Misr* he defends against Taha Husayn the idea that the East is spiritual and the West materialistic (or, more precisely, he affirms Ahmad Amin's defense of this thesis, pp. 32–34). Also, according to Musallam (p. 108), at least some of this was reprinted in one of the publications of the Muslim Brethren.

[6] *Al-Taṣwīr* was written about 1944 (my copy is given as the Seventh edition, Dar al-Shurūq, 1982) and might be described as an effort to use contemporary literary critical skills to understand the "inimitability" (*iʿjāz*) of the Qurʾan. I believe he wrote an article on this topic in 1939. I do not have publication information for *Mashāhid*.

[7] See, e.g., Musallam, *op. cit.*, p. 191; my sources differ as to whether he returned from the U.S. in 1950 or 1951.

[8] Among those with whom he cooperated in *Al-Fikr al-Jadīd* was Najīb Maḥfūẓ (Musallam, *op. cit,*, p. 190 *passim*).

[9] An English translation was published in 1953 by the American Council of Learned Societies (Kotb, Sayed, *Social Justice in Islam*, trans. John B. Hardie. Reprinted New York: Octagon Books, 1970). It is said to have been made with

he calls for a society based on Islamic principles, interpreted in a somewhat "socialist" way.

America appears to have impressed Quṭb as technologically advanced but spiritually bankrupt, and upon his return to Egypt he joined the Muslim Brethren and quickly became one of their leading ideologues. He supported the 1952 revolution but soon became disillusioned and when the Brethren fell out with the government in 1954 he was among those arrested. He spent most of the rest of his life in prison. From prison he continued to write, and to revise earlier writings, and his writing becomes increasingly radically Islamic. In his last book, *Maʿālim fī al-Ṭarīq* (*Milestones*),[10] published during a brief period of freedom from 1964 to 1966, he openly declared that the existing order in all countries, including so-called "Muslim" ones, was anti-Islamic, and called on Islamic activists to prepare themselves for a revolutionary replacement of the present "*jāhilī*" (i.e. barbaric and ignorant) order. He was rearrested, tried for conspiring against the government, and executed in 1966. Apparently the book, *Maʿālim fī al-Ṭarīq*, was the main evidence against him. The theory of *takfīr* (declaring the present government and its leaders, at least, and to some extent the whole of society, *kāfir*, i.e. unbelieving, anti-Islamic) in this book is generally agreed to have inspired later groups, such as *Al-Takfīr wa-l-Hijrah*[11] and the Jihad Society, which was responsible for the assassination of Anwar al-Sadat, although the degree to which their precise views are to be found in Quṭb's book is open to some debate.

Quṭb's ideological development may be described as a shift from what might be called a Muslim secularist position to one that I like

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"the cooperation of the author" (*ibid.*, p. iv), presumably during his stay in the U.S. The translation is not free from errors, however, so the cooperation may not have been too thorough.

[10] My copy is Beirut: Dār al-Shurūq, 1393/1973.

[11] A very radical group which kidnapped and assassinated the former Egyptian minister of Awqāf in 1977. *Al-Takfīr wa-l-Hijrah* means "to declare [society] *kāfir* and make *hijrah* ("emigration") from it". It was originally a label given by the group's opponents but evidently later accepted by members of the group (see Saad Eddin Ibrahim, "Anatomy of Egypt's Militant Groups: Methodological Note and Preliminary Findings", *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 12: 423–453). Unlike others, they considered Egyptian society as a whole to be *kāfir*, not just its leadership.

to call radical Islamist. By a secularist position I mean one that does not wish to organize the whole of society by the Islamic Shari$^{c}$ah but is prepared in greater or lesser measure to separate religion from other areas of society. By "Muslim secularism" I refer to a position which, though secularist in the sense just given, still highly values Islam as religion and heritage and is prepared to have it recognized publicly, for example, by recognizing it as the official religion of state. Generally speaking, this has been the "establishment" position in modern Egypt. By contrast, the radical Islamist position calls for the strict and full application of the Shari$^{c}$ah to all areas of political, economic and social life. While it often appears to be anti-Western, it is in fact quite willing to borrow from the West, particularly in the area of scientific technology, provided this does not involve borrowing what it views as unIslamic ideology. Neither is it totally inflexible in its interpretation of Islam. It favors opening the gate of absolute *ijtihād* (i.e. direct interpretation of the Qur$^{\prime}$an and the Sunnah without the obligation to follow later authorities), but is concerned lest this be used as a covert way of importing anti-Islamic Western ways. Insofar as it is inflexible, its inflexibility is more that of ideology than that of conservativism. We may also mention an intermediate position, sometimes called Islamic modernist, which likewise wishes to organize the whole of society by the Shari$^{c}$ah but is somewhat more radical in its practice of absolute *ijtihād*, emphasizing the flexibility of the Shari$^{c}$ah in the social sphere and tending to interpret it in terms of some Western-derived ideology. It is modernists who are inclined to claim that Islam is true democracy or to call for "Islamic socialism". The radical Islamist position explicitly rejects this tendency of Islamic modernism. Elsewhere I have discussed "Muslim secularism", "Islamic modernism" and "radical Islamism" as part of a larger typology of modern Muslim ideological orientations.[12]

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[12] See "Islam and Ideology: Towards a Typology" (*International Journal of Middle East Studies* 19 (1987): 307–336). This article also discusses several "traditionalist" types, which involve adding a second dimension to the spectrum. Sayyid Quṭb was apparently raised in a somewhat traditionalist environment. The trajectory of his development is suggested in one of the diagrams in the article (p. 322). I would modify this now slightly, since I am not certain that he ever went through an Islamic modernist phase. My analysis may be compared with that of Barakāt,

In these terms, Sayyid Quṭb appears to have moved from a Muslim secularist position in the 1930's to a moderate radical Islamism (if I may use such an expression) in the late 1940's and then to an extreme radical Islamism during the last years of his life. During this last stage he disowned most of what he had written during the secularist stage and rewrote some of what he had written during the less extreme Islamist stage, in particular, the earlier sections of his commentary on the Qur'an, *Fī Ẓilāl al-Qur'ān*.[13] The first edition of *Social Justice in Islam* represents the less extreme Islamist stage and is in many ways more moderate than his later writings although, as Sylvia Haim has noted, it "contains enough material to be developed into the rigidly argued belief of his *jāhiliyya* theory".[14] He did not disown this book but he did revise the later editions of it so as to keep it abreast of the development of his thought. In what follows we will examine these revisions in some detail in order to compare his later with his earlier Islamist thinking.[15] This will help us to see

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who divides Quṭb's adult life into three stages: a stage before Islamic orientation, a stage of general Islamic orientations (*al-ittijāh al-islāmī al-ʿāmm*), and a stage of definite Islamic orientation (*al-ittijāh al-islāmī al-muḥaddad*) (*op. cit.*, ch. 1). The first stage would appear to carry up to the early or mid-1940's; the second stage includes A/1; the third stage he dates from when Quṭb joined the Brethren, which he appears, erroneously, to think happened before he went to the U.S. The third stage he subdivides into two, before and after he went to prison in 1954.

[13] Barakāt, p. 18 *passim.*, intro.

[14] Haim, *op. cit.*, p. 153. I cannot be certain that Haim is here referring to the first edition, though she describes it as "his earlier book", but the description in my view fits.

[15] The only references to these revisions that I am aware of are a brief discussion in Musallam, *op. cit.*, pp. 191–2, a mention in the introduction to S. Badrul Hasan's translation of *Milestones* (Karachi: International Islamic Publishers, 1981, pp. 19–20) of the revision of some of Quṭb's statements about the Umayyads, and two brief references in Werner Ende, *Arabische Nation and Islamische Geschichte* (Beirut: Orient-Institut der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft, 1977), p. 197, fn. 4, p. 198, fn. 4. I cannot be absolutely certain that Sayyid Quṭb himself made all of the changes, but the consistency of these changes with the language and ideas of his later works makes this most likely and we know that he rewrote parts of *Fī Ẓilāl al-Qur'ān*. On the other hand, a letter from his brother, Muhammad Quṭb, printed at the beginning of a recent edition of *Fī Ẓilāl al-Qur'ān* (Dār al-Shurūq, 1982/1402) expresses the hope that the publisher will take the occasion of republication to review Quṭb's books and make the necessary corrections, and Musallam states that final editorial changes to A/1 were entrusted to Muḥammad Quṭb (*op. cit.*, 191). Even if the changes were not his they would be of interest, of course, although in this case they would not tell us about Sayyid Quṭb himself.

some of the details of the "right" end of the spectrum from secularist to radical Islamist described above, that is, some of the concrete differences between a more and a less extreme "radical Islamism".

The material presented here is based primarily on a comparison of the first edition and last (seventh), published posthumously. I have also had access to the third edition, published in the early part of 1952, and to parts of the second edition, and will refer to them occasionally. They have some revisions, but by far the majority and most striking of the changes are those in the last edition. In one sense, the changes are not fundamental. As I have noted, a basically "radical Islamist" position is already clearly presented in the first edition. The later changes make this position clearer and more consistent and sometimes have more dramatic implications for action. Many, to be sure, may result more from a changed situation or a changed perception of the situation by Sayyid Quṭb than from a basic ideological change, but these too are of interest since they show, at least, how a particular ideological position worked itself out in particular circumstances in the life of one important thinker.

Undoubtedly more than fifty percent of the paragraphs in the first edition have undergone some change, or have been eliminated or replaced entirely. The degree of change varies considerably. At one extreme are a large number of cases where only a phrase or even a single word is changed, though often with interesting implications. At the other extreme are several points where a number of pages are deleted, shifted and/or added, as many as 16 pages in one case (the total number of pages in the first edition is 269).[16] Appended to this article is a translation of the chapter on "Government in Islam" (*Siyāsat al-Ḥukm fī al-Islām*; Ch. 5, "Political Theory in Islam" in Hardie's English translation of the first edition) in which the differences between the first and last editions are indicated. This illustrates the degree and kinds of changes to be found throughout the book. Where possible this chapter will be used to illustrate the changes described below.

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[16] Pp. 246–262 in A/1; pp. 246–252 are shifted in the third and seventh editions to an earlier chapter (pp. 154–160 in A/7); the rest is deleted in the seventh but not the third edition. Just prior to this, one paragraph in the first edition is replaced by 6 pages in the seventh (pp. 283–289).

Some of the changes, at least at first glance, are of a fairly routine sort. There are efforts to improve or clarify the organization of material[17] and sometimes material is shortened apparently for the sake of conciseness. A number of footnote references are added in later editions and some changes in the quotes probably represent corrections. There are also changes that reflect events and developments after 1948 or Sayyid Quṭb's later awareness of earlier developments (e.g. Appendix ¶34; references to the Appendix are given by paragraph number). Some of these last clearly have ideological import, such as a somewhat decreased "socialist" tone at some points and the addition of the point that while the ruler may impose taxes other than *zakāt* "he may not strip people of all their possessions" (e.g. Appendix ¶55), which presumably represent a reaction to the nationalization measures of the ʿAbd al-Nāṣir government. As I shall suggest below, however, even many of the apparently "routine" changes may be seen as reflection of Quṭb's ideological development.

Since in my view the ideologically relevant changes tend with remarkable consistency in the direction of a clearer and more extreme "radical Islamism", I find it appropriate to discuss them in terms of the major characteristics that may be ascribed to this orientation. Both modernism and radial Islamism, as described above, hold that Islam provides a political, social and economic ideology and not just rules for worship and personal ethics or a cultural identity and heritage. Radical Islamism specifically stresses that this ideology 1) has a divine and not a human source, 2) is flexible but not in a manner to allow scope for human whims or serious uncertainty, 3) is comprehensive, covering all areas of life, 4) is distinct from and independent of all non-Islamic ideologies, 5) is inwardly consistent and harmonious, and 6) is relevant to all practical situations so that it can and must be put into practice. Under this last heading I include Sayyid Quṭb's discussions of early Islamic history and his assessment of the present situation.[18]

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[17] E.g. the shifted material mentioned in the previous note.

[18] These characteristics correlate to some degree with the characteristics that Quṭb ascribes to Islam in *Khaṣāʾiṣ*, as will be indicated in the appropriate places below.

*1. Divine Source*

That Islamic ideology, unlike secular ideologies, is based on divine or divinely guided sources, specifically the Qur'an and the Sunnah, is of course already asserted the first edition. The last edition, however, quite often makes changes or additions designed to reassert and emphasize this point. That God alone has authority is frequently stressed by additions such as the statement that "The theory of government in Islam is based on the witness that there is no god but God, and when one confesses that divinity (*ulūhiyyah*) belongs to God alone he thereby confesses that sovereignty (*ḥākimiyyah*) belongs to God alone . . ." (Appendix ¶29, cf. ¶31). Terms such as *ulūhiyyah* and *ḥākimiyyah* are quite distinctive of Sayyid Quṭb's later writing and hardly appear, if at all, in the first or third editions, but do with some frequency in the last edition.[19]

It follows, then, that human actions and institutions cannot be based on *purely* human decision and initiative. This point is stressed, for example, when the last edition expands the statement, "Political policy in Islam is based on justice on the part of the rulers, obedience on the part of the governed, and consultation between rulers and ruled" to read, "Political policy in Islam is based *after acceptance of the sole divinity (ulūhiyyah) and sovereignty (ḥākimiyyah) of God* on justice . . . ." (Appendix ¶31). This kind of addition reflects the point, stressed in *Milestones*, that acceptance of the basic creed (*ʿaqīdah*) that there is no god but God is logically and temporally prior to all practical application of Islamic rules.[20] One passage in the first edition that appears to put *ʿaqīdah* and legislation (*tashrīʿ*) on the same footing is later carefully reworded to make clear the priority of the former.[21] Sometimes an explicit mention of the Shariʿah is inserted

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[19] See also A/7 p. 9, cf. A/1 p. 12; A/7 p. 20, cf. A/1 pp. 21–22, etc. The term *ḥākimiyyah* apparently comes from Mawdūdi (O. Carré, *op. cit.*, Paris: Cerf, 1984, p. 188). Islam's characteristic of having a divine source is called *rabbāniyyah* in *Khaṣāʾiṣ*, ch. 1, and the phrases *manhaj rabbānī, niẓām al-islām al-rabbānī* and *malāmiḥuh al-rabbānī* are each added at least once in A/7 (A/7 p. 52, cf. A/1 p. 50 and Appendix ¶17, ¶56), while *al-maṣdar al-rabbānī* appears at least twice (A/7 pp. 248, 248).

[20] *Maʿālim fī al-Ṭarīq*, Beirut: Dār al-Shurūq, 1393/1973, pp. 86 ff. and elsewhere.

[21] A/1 p. 237, A/7 p. 265.

in a comparable context; for example, "*Qiyās, ijtihād* and wide authority left to the head of state (*walī al-amr*) . . . all these are living means for continual growth . . ." becomes "*Ijtihad* always open and wide authority left to the leader (*imām*) *who governs by God's Shariᶜah* . . ."[22] Elsewhere, in a long changed section, the point is made in the last edition that by accepting the exclusive authority of the Shariᶜah both ruler and ruled renounce the rights of both sovereignty (*ḥākimiyyah*) and divinity (*ulūhiyyah*).[23] This concern that the authority of the ruler be limited by the Shariᶜah is linked in at least one place with the assertion, added to the last edition, that people must retain enough economic independence to be in a position to criticize the ruler should he act unIslamically (Appendix ¶55), a point also related probably to actions of Abd al-Nasir's government, as noted above.

Related to these points are additions that stress the point that no ruler or clergy can claim divine appointment or authority (e.g. Appendix ¶38, ¶40), additions which also intensify the distinctively Sunni character of Sayyid Quṭb's thought. There are also changes that seem to aim at a more precise indication of the place of the prophet Muhammad. On one hand there are modifications designed to enhance his position, including regular addition of the pious formula, "May God bless him and grant him peace", while others stress that he has no divine power or special privilege on his own (Appendix ¶48).

The changes discussed so far represent a highlighting and intensification of ideas already present in the first edition. A point at which there does seem to be a substantive change in Sayyid Quṭb's position is suggested by the fact that the last edition eliminates statements that Islam extends rights to certain non-Mulsims "on a purely human basis" (Appendix ¶21) and that it "transcends religious partisanship at many points" (Appendix ¶13, cf. ¶22). Thus the last

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[22] A/1 p. 236, A/7 p. 264. I would take the change from "*qiyās* and *ijtihād*" to "*ijtihād* always open" and from "*walī al-amr*" to "*imām*" as an effort to introduce more precise terminology. Likewise, in the reference in the previous note, "laws and systems based on Islamic thought" becomes "laws and systems derived from the Islamic Sharīᶜah".

[23] A/7 pp. 244–245. This is in a section where several pages of material are completely rewritten (A/1 pp. 215–221, A/7 pp. 244–248).

trace of a humanistic and secular basis for human society appears to be eliminated, a good example of the way in which the radical Islamist position is carried rigorously through to its logical extreme.

A similarly rigorous, and better known, carrying through of the idea that Islam is based on a divine source and authority is the stark contrast between Jahiliyyah and Islam in Sayyid Quṭb's later thinking, which is not be found in the first and third editions, but is to be found in material added in the last, such as ". . the Islamic system of government differs fundamentally from all systems of government and all social systems invented by mankind". (Appendix ¶30, cf. ¶24, ¶29, ¶56). In the same vein is the replacement of "Western systems" with "human systems that humans have formed for themselves in isolation from God" (Appendix ¶4). Passages suggesting that those who compromise on this point may nevertheless be Muslims are modified to remove this suggestion; thus in at least one place "Muslims" becomes "defeatists" (Appendix ¶8, cf.¶4).

This leads to the crucial claim that Egyptian society today, as indeed all so-called Muslim societies, is no longer Islamic. This is in fact already asserted in the first edition,[24] but in this edition it is also stressed that Islam "stopped" only at the official level of government, while at the level of moral ideal and practice among the people it long continued and "continues to the present working in those areas that are not affected by the tendencies of the official state".[25] By contrast, in the seventh edition we are told that the failure to obey God in all areas of life means that the "existence" of Islam has stopped, and that we must not be afraid to say this openly, for fear of discouraging people. Admittedly, the Islam whose existence has stopped, temporarily, did exist for 1200 years and still has deep roots both in Egyptian soil and in human nature, and on the basis of these facts a strong hope is expressed for the future,[26] so the contrast is not absolute. Still, the difference in tone is striking. The contrast between the ideal and the actual is starker and there is much

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[24] A/1 p. 216, where the well known Qurʾānic passage, "Whoever does not rule (or judge) by what God has revealed, they are the *kāfirs*" appears as a proof text.

[25] A/1 pp. 220.

[26] A/7 pp. 247–248, a radically rewritten section.

less recognition of positive factors in the present social situation. The road to the *takfīr* of Egyptian society as a whole (the position of the so-called *takfīr wa-hijrah* group), as distinct from *takfīr* of the government only is clearer.

### 2. *Flexible but Firm*

Islamic modernists stress the flexibility of Islamic social principles. Radical Islamists likewise claim flexibility but seek to balance against it a concern for proper guidance and practical certainty, what Sayyid Quṭb in another writing calls "firmness" (*thabāt*).[27] In *Social Justice in Islam* a slight but distinct shift in the balance from flexibility toward firmness can be discerned between the first and last editions. The statement that "Islam is not a rigid system" remains (Appendix ¶56, with a slight change, "rigidified", which I would take to convey the idea that Islam is not *unduly* rigid) but an express statement later in the first edition that Islam is "a flexible system"[28] is in a section deleted from the last. He continues to affirm *ijtihād* in the last edition,[29] but also stresses that it applies only the absence of *naṣṣ*.[30] The important point, I think, is that while Islam is sufficiently flexible to deal with all possible situations, and therefore *ijtihād* may lead to different specific results in different situations, it provides sufficient certainty in any given situation to protect the Muslim against error and human arbitrariness. Concerning the practice of consultation by the Rightly Guided caliphs, the first edition says, "This consultation did not follow any fixed or specifically marked system *because the circumstances of the age required only this sort of consultation*". The last edition changes this to read, "This consultation did not follow any fixed or specifically marked system *because the*

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[27] *Khaṣā'iṣ*, ch. 2.

[28] P. 259.

[29] P. 264, even adding here that it is "always open"; cf. note 22 above.

[30] P. 245; cf. *Ma'ālim fi al-Ṭarīq* (Beirut: Dar al-Shurūq, 1393/1973), p. 95, "no *ijtihād* when there is a *naṣṣ*". Compare also Appendix ¶27: "This [the Islamic system] follows comprehensive human principles in all its legislation and administrative provision, setting the general foundations for broad principle and leaving *many of* the applications to the development of time and the emergence of specific needs"; the italicized words are added in the last edition.

*practical circumstances determined who should be consulted in each period so clearly that there was no uncertainty about it* (Appendix ¶43, cf. ¶45; italics added).

### *3. Comprehensive*[31]

That Islam covers all areas of life is a point already stressed in the first edition, but there are occasional additions to stress it even further (e.g., Appendix ¶4, ¶24)[32] or, for example, to make the point that it applies not only to government (Appendix ¶43). At one point the last edition adds mention of the need for a separate study of Islamic economy[33] and at another a strong statement against *ribā*[34] and a passing reference to profit sharing.[35] In some respect the last edition is more reluctant to go into the details of Islamic social legislation, but this relates, I shall argue below, not to the comprehensiveness of Islam but to the inappropriateness of undertaking this at the time. There is some tendency in the last edition to stress slightly more that Islam deals with the spiritual as well as the material and social dimensions of life and to shift the balance slightly toward the former.[36]

### *4. Distinct and Independent*

Of particular importance to the radical Islamist position is the assertion that Islam is an independent system, clearly distinct from other systems and not to be confused with them or adapted to them, although there may be superficial similarities in details. This point is already quite clearly made in the first edition (Appendix ¶4–5), but it is strengthened in various ways in the last. In particular, language such as "the socialism of Islam" or "the democracy of Islam" is specifically rejected (Appendix ¶17, cf. ¶30). We may note here, also, that some modifications make his economic teachings appear

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[31] *Shumūl* in *Khaṣā'iṣ*. pp. 91 ff.
[32] Cf. A/7 p. 34, A/1 p. 31.
[33] P. 124.
[34] A/7 pp. 132–136, cf. A/1 pp. 121–122.
[35] A/7 p. 136, cf. A/1 p. 122.
[36] E.g., changes of wording from A/1 pp. 31–32 to A/7 p. 32.

less "socialist",[37] balancing the public and private sectors more, but this is not absolutely consistent[38] and attacks on capitalism are sometimes added.[39] The net effect of all of this, I think, is to underline the difference between Islam on one hand and democracy, capitalism and communism on the other.

There is also a tendency to eliminate what might be called "defensive" apologetic, i.e. efforts to interpret Islam in a way more congenial to Western thinking, such as the elimination of a passage claiming that *jihād* is defensive warfare (Appendix ¶21, cf. the addition of the word *jihād* in ¶25). On the other hand "aggressive" apologetic, attacking others or emphasizing the strength of Islam, is maintained or even strengthened (e.g. ¶33). An example of the change in apologetic strategy appears in the discussion of the idea that Egypt is no longer Islamic. In the first edition the Western writers Gouilly and Gibb are quoted in support of the view that Islam persists among the people although not at the level of government.[40] In the last edition these references disappear and are replaced by a harshly critical comment on Wilfred Cantwell Smith's defense of Turkish secularism in *Islam in Modern History*, on the grounds that this is essentially an effort to deceive Muslims into thinking that something unIslamic is Islamic.[41]

The last edition is, therefore, less willing to give the appearance of openness to Western ways than the first (and third) even where this is somewhat unavoidable. This is particularly illustrated by the discussions of educational philosophy and the place of Western literature in the Muslim educational curriculum in the second last chapter ("The Present State and the Prospects of Islam"[42]), on both of which the last edition changes or introduces considerable material. In the first and third editions Quṭb stresses that Western scientific

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[37] E.g., A/1 p. 32, cf. A/7 p. 33.

[38] E.g., A/7 p. 31, cf. A/1 p. 31, where the elimination of a reference to *inherited* differences between people might be taken as a more "socialist" statement.

[39] E.g., A/1 p. 60, cf. A/7 p. 63.

[40] A/1 p. 220.

[41] A/7 p. 247, cf. A/7 p. 293.

[42] Hardie's translation of *Ḥāḍir al-Islām wa Mustaqbaluh*, more literally "The Present and Future of Islam". This is the 8th chapter in Hardie's translation; the chapters are not numbered in the Arabic editions. The chapter titles are the same in the first and last editions.

and educational methods are rooted in philosophies opposed to Islam, and seeks to show this in the case of American pragmatism. Formal study of Western philosophies should be limited to the highest levels in the universities. Nevertheless, he also stresses that he does not propose to isolate Muslims from general worldwide thought and culture and allows that some exposure to Western philosophical presuppositions is unavoidable, pointing out that there is no unmixed good or evil in life.[43] In the last edition this is radically changed. He begins by stressing that the Shari$^{c}$ah covers all areas of life, not just law, and that all areas of culture must be firmly rooted in Islamic sources. Only the "pure sciences" (i.e. for the most part, purely physical or technical) may be studied under non-Muslims, and this only because of necessity. Moreover these must be separated from the philosophical ideas associated with them (e.g. Darwinian evolution). He appears to take for granted that this is possible. Whereas in the earlier editions he allows an association between the experimental method and Western philosophical presuppositions in practice, here his point is that the experimental method came originally from Islam and was later divorced from its spirituality by the West.[44] The effort to show that American pragmatism is unIslamic, is replaced by a simple contrast between Islam and Jahiliyyah and talk of conspiracies by Jews and Christians. On literature there is a brief section in the first and third editions justifying the selective use such Western literature as reflects spiritual values consistent with Islam.[45] This is largely retained in the last edition, but just before it is added several pages on the nature of Islamic literature, stressing that it arises out of the Islamic "conception" (*taṣawwur*) and is very definitely value oriented and concerned to guide society, although he still states, as he does in the earlier editions, that direct preaching of moral virtues is not the function of literature.[46]

Also connected, in my view, with the concern for the independence and distinctiveness of Islam is a tendency to replace

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[43] A/1 pp. 237–244, A/3 pp. 248–254.
[44] A/7 pp. 266–278.
[45] A/1 p. 244, A/3 p. 255.
[46] A/7 pp. 278–282.

general terms with more distinctively or precisely "Islamic" terms, e.g. *imām* for *sulṭān* (Appendix ¶53–54), *ummah* for *shaʿb*.[47] Other changes introduce terms characteristic of Sayyid Quṭb's later writings which may not seem to be so distinctively or traditionally Islamic but which he seems to see as more precise in an Islamic context, such as *ḥākimiyyah* and *ulūhiyyah*, already mentioned, or *taṣawwur* (conception) and *manhaj* (method, programme), which replace terms such as *falsafah* and *fikrah* (Appendix ¶6, ¶8, ¶18). These last seem to be part of a conscious effort by Sayyid Quṭb to develop a vocabulary which is both appropriate for modern conditions and authentically Islamic.[48]

We may also mention under this heading a harsher judgment on Jews and on Christianity. At one point both an attack on Zionism and a reference to Jewish plots in Muhammad's time are added.[49] On Christianity there is a shift from a position that would allow at least some validity to Christian spirituality in the days before Islam and as a preparation for Islam to one that stresses the corruptions introduced by eccliastical Christianity from Paul on and its social irrelevance or harm.[50]

### *5. Inwardly Consistent, Harmonious*[51]

The view that Islam is an inwardly consistent and harmonious "system" is, I think, important for Sayyid Quṭb in making it possible for it to be at once flexible, comprehensive and distinctive. This concern is already clear in the first edition (Appendix ¶6, ¶8, ¶18), but stressed a bit more, perhaps by the addition of a phrase (Appendix ¶18) and of the specific point that in the Islamic understanding "religion" means a "system" (*niẓām*, Appendix ¶20, ¶24). Also,

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[47] A/1 pp. 33–34, A/7 pp. 34–35.

[48] For a clear statement on the importance of a proper vocabulary, free of alien associations, see *Khasāʾis*, p. 97.

[49] A/7 pp. 255–256, A/1 p. 228.

[50] A/7 pp. 4–8, A/1 pp. 6–12. Associated with this, perhaps, is the suggestion of a shift away from a progressive evolutionary view of pre-Islamic religious history to one placing more stress on the rejection of previous prophets, still insisting off course, on the superiority of Muhammad's Shariʿah as the most complete (A/1 p. 22, A/7 p. 21).

[51] Cf. *Tawāzun* in *Khasāʾis*. pp. 114 ff.

the introduction of the term *manhaj* (method, program) tends in the same direction.[52]

We may also note with interest the material about the appropriate method and program (*manhaj*) for rewriting Islamic history that is added in the second last chapter in the last edition. Here we are told that "history is not events but the interpretation of these events, and a discovery of the visible and hidden bonds that unite their diverse aspects, and make of them a unity of interconnected links and interacting parts developing in relation to epoch and environment as does a living being in time and space."[53] Essentially the same is later said of human history as a whole[54] and it is asserted that the discussion of the present and future of Islamic should flow natural out of this understanding. Thus, not only is Islam, viewed ideally as a set of beliefs and practices, an organic and interrelated system, but so too in effect is the actual course of Islamic and human history.

As will be evident from some of the previous discussions, the last edition of *Social Justice in Islam* is more internally consistent and systematic than the first (one might say tediously and ruthlessly so) and this undoubtedly reflects as increased sense of Islam's consistency. In this respect, some of the apparently routine efforts to improve the organization of the work may be seen as also fitting the ideological changes.

### *6. Relevant to Practical Life*

That Islam can and must be put into practice in society is of course one of the main messages of *Social Justice in Islam* in all its edi-

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[52] I have discussed these points in greater detail, including the distinction between *niẓām* and *manhaj* in Quṭb's later writings, in an article, 'Islam as a "System" in the Later Writings of Sayyid Quṭb' (*Middle Eastern Studies* 25/1 (January 1989): 31–50).

[53] A/7 p. 283. This section appears to be drawn from another of Sayyid Quṭb's workings, *Fī al-Tārīkh, Fikrah wa-Manhaj*. This statement is based on the selections of this latter work translated in Y.Y. Haddad, *Contemporary Islam and the Challenge of History* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1982), pp. 165–8, as I do not have access to the Arabic version. A comparison of this material with A/7 pp. 283–6 suggests that Quṭb made changes when incorporating it in A/7 similar to those one finds between A/1 and A/7.

[54] A/7 p. 289.

tions. The point is sharpened and stressed in various ways, however, in the last edition. For example, in the first edition he comments favorably on Taha Husayn's book, *The Great Civil War-ᶜUthmān*; in the last edition he retains the favorable comment but adds a criticism of Husayn's alleged conclusion "that Islam in the form it achieved in the time of the Apostle of God . . . and the two leaders after him was a lofty anomaly which humanity could not sustain for long". (Appendix ¶16)

This same concern seems to animate many of the changes in his discussion of Islamic history in the chapters on "The Historical Reality in Islam" and "The Present and Future of Islam".[55] In the first edition a very ideal picture is painted of the situation under Muhammad in Medina and under Abu Bakr and ᶜUmar. If ᶜAli had followed immediately as caliph, it is argued, this would have continued and Islamic practices and institutions would have become strong enough to resist later moral and physical assaults. Due to an unfortunate "coincidence" (*muṣādafah*), however, Uthman came to power instead and, since he was an old man, he was not able to resist the blandishments of his Umayyad relatives and various unIslamic and corrupt practices were introduced. This process was carried to the extreme under Muᶜawiyah and his family, whose misdeeds are described at some lenght, and the tender plant of Islam was virtually destroyed. Nevertheless, the Islamic spirit continued among some and reasserted itself from time to time, as in the caliphate of ᶜUmar ibn ᶜAbd al-ᶜAziz, in figures such as Abū Dharr, who spoke out boldly against the practices of the Umayyads, and in the Muslim response to the Crusades under Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn. Countries such as Egypt remained Islamic at least in principle until the overt introduction of French law in the nineteenth century. The choice of ᶜUthman was not all bad, he also says, since it did at least give firm basis to the Islamic principle of *shūrā* even at the risk of error.[56]

The main lines of this analysis continue in the last edition, but with some interesting differences in detail. There is some tendency

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[55] Chapters 7 and 8 in Hardie's translation. Here the translations of the titles are my own (cf. note 42, above).

[56] A/1 pp. 142–223.

to idealize even more the early period. References to Muhammad using specious arguments (*shubahāt*)[57] and to ʿUmar taking a position on purely pragmatic grounds are deleted, and the judgment against ʿUthman is moderated somewhat, while the tendency to put the main blame on his Umayyad secretary, Marwan, is increased.[58] While at some points the moral judgment against the Umayyads is made more explicit, much of the detailed description of their misdeeds is eliminated[59] and there is a bit more effort to stress that their misdeeds were not the fault of Islam and, especially important, I think, to downplay their destructive effects on Islam. Thus at one point in reference to their effects the phrase in the first edition "after the spirit of Islam was strangled" becomes in the last edition "after this premature shock".[60] Similarly, in commenting on the Abbassid, al-Mansur, the first edition says that he built his state in the shadow "of what we call today *ʿurf* judgments". In the last edition this becomes "of terror and violence" but it is added that "he could not proceed far in that because the authority of Islam existed and protected people . . .".[61] This seems designed to show that early Islam was not a "lofty anomaly". The last edition also eliminates entirely the idea that the choice of ʿUthman was a "coincidence" and the ascription of Muʿāwiya's behavior to the mere fact that he was the son of people like Abū Sufyān and Hind. The point here seems to be that Islam is not defeated by mere chance, nor by hereditary factors, as distinct from moral choice. The elimination of chance factors may also relate a more lively sense of divine control of history (e.g. Appendix ¶29) and to the "organic" view of history mentioned earlier.

A noticeable change is the omission in the last edition of some ten pages, at the end of the chapter on "The Present and Future of

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[57] A/1 p. 144, cf. A/7 p. 170.

[58] Ende has a brief discussion of Quṭb's treatment of the early caliphate (*op. cit.*, pp. 196–198) and notes moderation of Quṭb's judgment on ʿUthman and the Umayyads in the 5th as compared with the first edition (*op. cit.*, p. 197, fn. 4).

[59] A/1 pp. 174–177, cf. A/7 p. 205.

[60] A/1 p. 177, A/7 p. 205.

[61] A/1 p. 158, A/7 p. 185–186.

[62] *Maʿālim fi al-Ṭarīq* (Beirut: Dar al-Shurūq, 1973), pp. 33–37. O. Carré notes a similar contrast between *Fī ẓilāl al-Qurʾān* and (the first edition of) *Social Justice in Islam* (*op. cit.*, p. 164).

Islam'', which in the earlier editions sketch out some of the details of Islamic social and economic legislation. This probably reflects Quṭb's later, more revolutionary view stated in *Milestones* that until a society has committed itself to Islam as its way of life, the role of the Islamic activist is to work for this basic commitment and not to speculate about the details of Islamic legislation.[62] Earlier in the chapter the last edition (only) states, ''when a Muslim society is established in fact, then the field will be open for *ijtihād* and the application of the norms of this religion in this society'',[63] and elsewhere makes modifications to stress the priority of basic beliefs over legislation.[64] This gives a more doctrinaire hue to his position, a tendency also reinforced by the fact that while this chapter deletes material on the details of Islamic legislation, it expands the discussion of the role of literature in an Islamic society and the Islamic view of history (the content of these is discussed above).[65]

This more revolutionary attitude is also reflected, I believe, in the changes to the short final chapter, ''At the Crossroads'' in which he considers the future. In the first edition he argues that the differences between Communism and Capitalism are superficial and that, in fact, the Western world will in time go Communist since this is the logical culmination of its materialism. The only real alternative is Islam, and it is between the Islamic and the Communists ways that Muslims must choose. He closes on a note of hope alluding to the birth of Indonesia and Pakistan and awakening in the Arab world. In the second and third editions he adds to this a few sentences expressing the hope that an Islamic bloc, distinct from the other two, will come into existence on the international scene and contribute to world harmony. The seventh edition is radically revised. It is still insisted that there is no essential difference between Communism and Capitalism but the prediction that the West will go Communist is eliminated, as are the references to Pakistan, Indonesia, Arab awakening and an Islamic bloc. Instead we are confronted with the stark choice between Islam and all other systems in

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[63] A/7 p. 264, cf. A/1 p. 236.

[64] A/1 pp. 236–7 cf. A/7 p. 265 and A/1 pp. 261–262, A/3 pp. 271–72, A/7 p. 289.

[65] A/7 pp. 278–282, cf. A/1 pp. 244 and A/7 pp.283–289 cf. A/1 pp. 244–246.

a world where "East" and "West" are united in warfare against Islamic revival. The important thing is for Muslims to recognize that it is a matter of returning Islam to "existence" and not to be deceived by the claims of people like Smith that the present conditions are in any way Islamic. The result of the first choice will be to put themselves in the position that Muhammad himself was in, with its attendant trials and eventual success. The result of the second choice will be to "put Islamic banners over the camps of depravity and decay".[66] He closes affirming that "Our hope in God is great that He will open people's vision to the truth and their eyes to reality, and God it is who guides, and gives aid and success".[67]

*Concluding Comments*

The changes in the last, short chapter reflect fairly accurately the changes in the book as a whole. The basic position is the same. Islam is a distinct, divinely ordained system for all aspects of life, and in view of this other matters pale into insignificance. This point is more starkly and consistently put in the last edition, however, and any apparent compromises with a more moderate position are eliminated. The contrast between the divinely based Islamic system and all others is more starkly drawn. Any suggestions of a humanly based social system are eliminated, and while flexibility and human initiative remain, their firm guidance by the basic sources is more stressed. Those so-called Muslims who reject his basic position are no longer seen as Muslims. Likewise, any hint of compromise with the West is eliminated so far as possible, as is any apparent hope for a gradual transition from the present to the desired future, although this last not stated quite so clearly as in some of his other later works. A firm faith in the basics is more important, or at least more urgent, than practical application, while at the same time any hint that Islam might not be applicable in practice is most firmly excluded. Failures in the past are not due to weaknesses of Islam, or to chance, but to wrong moral choice by humans. But implication, at least, the same will be true of the future.

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[66] A/7 p. 293.
[67] A/7 p. 294.

It is beyond the scope of this paper to discuss in any detail the causes of these changes, but it is perhaps appropriate to close with a few suggestions. Quṭb's later writing was undoubtedly influenced by the writings of the Indo-Pakistani Abul Aʿlā Mawdūdī, which became available in Arabic in the 1950's. This is reflected in some of the new terminology and probably in the increased stress on the "systematic" nature of Islam (both the assertion that Islam is a system and the tendency to describe and treat it as such), which is very characteristic of Mawdūdī's writings.[68] Criticism of the first edition of *Social Justice in Islam* by other Islamists probably also had some effect.[69] Primarily, though, I believe that the course of events after 1948, in his life and in Egypt and the world at large, impinging on a systematic mind already commited to a radical Islamism, led to these changes. The leaders of Egypt and of other Arab and Islamic countries were apparently steering their countries in radically secularist directions and the official spokemen for Islam, such as the ʿUlamaʾ of the Azhar, seemed to be doing little more than giving this process an Islamic whitewash. Compromise seemed unlikely to accomplish anything more than this, so what was needed was a clear stand showing where the followers of Islam stood and, ultimately, a revolution that would give them a chance to put their theories into practice. Moreover, Sayyid Quṭb's prison experience hardly provided any training in moderation and the isolation from outside political society must have encouraged the tendency toward the theoretical and radical consistency that marks his later thought.

## Appendix

The following is a translation of the fifth chapter of *Social Justice in Islam*, comparing the first edition with the last (seventh) edition.

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[68] On Mawdūdī's influence on Quṭb see O. Carré, *op. cit.*, p. 20, etc., and note 19 above. Carré states that (the first edition) of *Social Justice in Islam* was written before Quṭb had read Mawdūdī (*op. cit.*, p. 163); on the evidence this would be true of the third edition, too. On Mawdūdī's "systemic" view of Islam see especially W.C. Smith, *Islam in Modern History* (New York: N.A.L. Mentor, 1957), pp. 236–7.

[69] Ende notes some Salafī criticism of Quṭb's discussion of the rebellion against ʿUthman (*op. cit.*, pp. 198–9).

Material that is in the first edition only is enclosed in brackets, { . . . }; material that is in the last edition only is enclosed in double brackets, {{ . . . }}; where the last edition replaces one or more words with another or others, the material from the first edition appears first and is separated by a slash from the material from the last edition, { . . . }/ {{ . . . }}. Where a whole paragraph or most of a paragraph appears in only one edition, the relevant material is not only enclosed in brackets but also indented slightly, at the right margin for material only in the first edition and at the left margin for material only in the last edition. Words added by the translator to make the sense clearer are indicated by straight brackets, [ . . . ]. Arabic words, explanations, and some references are enclosed in parentheses, ( . . . ), as are the quotations from the Qur'an and the Hadīth, which are footnoted in the Arabic texts. Differences in footnoting between the two editions are indicated by brackets as described above. For the Qur'an I have generally followed Arberry's translation but translations of Hadīth are my own. The references to the Hadīth are given as they are in the Arabic editions but for Qur'anic references I give chapter numbers rather than titles, as the Arabic texts do, and the verse numbers of Arberry's and Pickthall's translations; where these differ, both numbers are given, Pickthall's first (e.g. 2:188/ 184: 188 in Pickthall, 184 in Arberry). Other references are given in footnotes. The paragraphing corresponds for the most part, but not completely, to the paragraphing in the Arabic texts (which vary slightly). Paragraphs are numbered here for convenient reference.

## *Government in Islam*[1]

(¶1) Every discussion of "social justice in Islam" must include a discussion of government in Islam, in accordance with the basic principle we laid down when were discussing the nature of Islamic social justice, namely, that it deals with all aspects of life and all kinds of

[1] More literally "policy of governance" (*siyāsat al-ḥukm*). Hardie, in his translation of the first edition (S. Kotb, *Social Justice in Islam*, trans. John B. Hardie. New York: Octagon Press, 1970, reprint of 1953 ed.), translates "political theory", which reflects Sayyid Quṭb's intention fairly well but suggests a different Arabic phrase (*al-naẓariyyah al-siyāsiyyah*) which S. Quṭb might conceivably have used but didn't (he does use *naẓariyyat al-ḥukm* in ¶29).

activity, just as it deals with both spiritual and material values, which are inextricably intermixed.

(¶2) Government is related to all of this, in addition to the fact that the enforcement of legislation is dependent on it, as is the maintenance of all aspects of society, the realization of justice and harmony, and the distribution of wealth according to the principles prescribed by Islam.

(¶3) An adequate treatment of government in Islam would be lengthy and would require a separate study, but since our purpose in this book is to explain only that aspect of this policy which bears on social justice, we will try so far as possible to limit ourselves to this. The difficulty in studying Islam is that the enquirer finds that all aspects of it are interconnected and cannot be separated from each other. The whole of this religion forms a unity; worship and human relations (*muᶜāmalāt*), government and economic policy, legislation and moral guidance, belief and behaviour, this world and the world to come, all of these are well coordinated parts of an integrated system, and it is difficult to single out one of them for discussion without dealing with the others too, but we shall try, so far as possible.

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(¶4) Some {Muslims} who discuss the Islamic system {{—whether social system or the system of government or the form of government}} make an effort to show relationships and similarities between it and the other kinds of systems that humanity has known in ancient and modern times, before and since Islam. Some of them believe that they find strong support for Islam when they show a relationship between it and some other ancient or modern system.

(¶5) This effort reflects nothing but an inward feeling of defeat in the face of the {Western systems}/{{human systems that humans have formed for themselves in isolation from God}}, for Islam gains nothing if there are similarities between it and other systems, and loses nothing if there are not. Islam presents to humanity an example of a complete system the like of which is not found in any other system the world has known before or since Islam. Islam does not try and has not tried to imitate any of the other systems, or to establish any relationship or similarity between itself and them, but

rather chooses its own unique and distinctive path and presents to humanity a complete cure for all its problems.

(¶6) It may happen in the development of human systems that they coincide with Islam sometimes and diverge from it sometimes, but it is a complete and independent system and has no connection with these other systems, neither when they coincide with it nor when they diverge from it, for such divergence and coinciding are purely accidental and in scattered parts. Agreement or disagreement in partial and accidental matters is of no consequence. What matters is the basic {idea}/{{view}}, the particular {philosophy (*falsafah*)}/{{conception (*taṣawwur*)}}, and Islam has its own basic {idea}/{{view}} and its own particular {philosophy}/{{conception}} from which the parts branch out. These parts may coincide with or diverge from the parts of other systems but after each coinciding or divergence Islam continues on its own unique path.

{{(¶7) The basic principle upon which the Islamic system is based differs from the basic principles upon which all human systems are based. It is based upon the principle that sovereignty (*ḥākimiyyah*) belongs to God alone, and He alone legislates. The other systems are based on the principle that sovereignty belongs to man, and it is he who legislates for himself. These two basic principles do not coincide, and therefore the Islamic system cannot really coincide with any other system, and cannot be called anything but "Islam".}}

(¶8) It is not the task of the Islamic enquirer, when he undertakes to discuss the Islamic system, to seek out similarities to or agreements with any other system, ancient or modern. These similarities and agreements—in addition to being superficial and partial, arising from mere coincidence in matters of detail, and not in the general {philosophy}/{{conception}} or the basic {idea}/{{view}}—add nothing to the strength of Islam, as some {Muslims}/{{defeatists}} think. The right way is for them to present the bases of their religion in and of themselves in the total faith that these bases are complete, whether they agree with all other systems or disagree with all others. The very effort to find support for the Islamic systems in similarities to or agreements with other systems is a sign of a defeatist attitude as we have said, and is an effort that will not be

made by a Muslim enquirer who has a true knowledge of this religion and studies it in the right way.

(¶9) In the course of its origin and development, the world has known a number of systems, but the Islamic system is not one of these systems. It is not one like them nor it derived from them as a group. It is a system which stands on its own, independent in its thought and unique in its methods, and we must present it as something independent, because it originated independently and proceeded on its way independently.

(¶ 10) Because of these considerations, we cannot accept Dr Haykal's interpretation of the Islamic world as an "Islamic Empire", nor his statement that "Islam was an imperial power" for there is nothing further from the true understanding of the spirit of Islam than to speak of it as imperial, however much we may distinguish between the meaning of Islamic empire and empire in the currently familiar sense. Nothing is further from an understanding of the true nature of the relationships in the Islamic world than to speak of it as an Islamic empire!

(¶11) It is strange that Dr. Haykal, in his discussion of Islamic government in *The life of Muhammad* or *Al-Ṣiddīq Abū Bakr* or *Al-Fārūq ʿUmar*, seeks the true inner difference between the nature of Islam and the nature of the other systems the world has known, and yet is induced to use these expressions by virtue of the hold that foreign phenomena have over his thinking as well as by the similarities between some manifestations of Islam and those of imperialism {{and by virtue of the fact that he has not noticed that basic divergence between a system based on the sovereignty of God alone and another system based on the sovereignty of man!}}.

(¶12) Perhaps the point of formal similarity is that the Islamic world was composed of a number of provinces with widely differing races and cultures ruled from a single center; this is a phenomenon of empire! But it is merely an outward phenomenon; what matters is the way the center views the provinces and the nature of the relationships between them.

(¶13) Anyone who studies the spirit of Islam and its way of governing knows for certain that it is the furthest thing from the empires

we know today. For Islam gives equality to the Muslims from al parts of the world, and it rejects racial {{, national}} and regional partisanship {, indeed it even transcends religious partisanship at many points, as we have seen}. In accordance with this spirit it does not make the provinces into colonies, nor places to be exploited or milked for the sole benefit of the center. Every province is a member of the body of the Islamic world, and its people have the same rights as those of the center. If some provinces were governed by a govenor from the Islamic center {in Medina}, he governed by virtue of being a Muslim qualified for the position and not as a colonial ruler, while many of the conquered[2] provinces were governed by one of their own people, {not because he was one of their people} but only because he was a Muslim qualified for this position. Likewise, the moneys collected in any province were first spent within it and then if anything was left it was sent to the public treasury of the Muslims to be spent upon the Muslims in general as needed and not be appropriated by the people of the center at the risk of impoverishing the provinces, as is the practice in empires.

(¶14) All of this sets a great distance between the Islamic world, or more accurately the Islamic community (*ummah*), and an empire, and to speak of Islam as imperial is to introduce a term that is foreign both to the spirit of Islam and to its actual history. It is more appropriate to say that it was {broadly human}/{{worldwide}} in its tendency because of its strong idea of the {oneness of humanity}/{{unity of the world}} and its goal of gathering all humanity under its banner of equality and brotherhood.

(¶15) Dr. Taha Husayn has been more precise when, in the introduction to his book, *The Great Civil War—ʿUthmān*, he discusses the Islamic system of government in comparison to all other systems and says that it differs in its basic nature from others, and this is the truth when one looks at the spirit and nature of government and not at its outward details.

{{(¶16) However, Dr. Taha Husayn makes this statement of his the premise to a very different and dangerous conclusion, and

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[2] Or perhaps we should translate "liberated" (*lit.*: "opened").

this is that Islam in the form it achieved in the time of the Apostle of God—God bless him and grant him peace—and the two leaders after him was a lofty anomaly which humanity could not sustain for long. This is the tune sung by the orientalists and their disciples in Islamic countries as a preface to the claim that Islam is not suitable to be the system of government in these days.

(¶17) Likewise, we cannot accept the talk that we hear about "the socialism of Islam" or "the democracy of Islam" or other such efforts to mix the system made by God—may He be glorified—with systems made by humans, bearing the human stamp and characterized by the human mixture of imperfection and perfection, error and accuracy, weakness and strength, fancy and truth . . . while the divinely ordained (*rabbānī*) system of Islam is free from these characteristics and is perfect and comprehensive and completely untouched by error.}}

(¶18) Islam {, as I have said,} presents independent solutions to the problems of humanity, deriving them from {its unified thought}/{{its particular conceptions, its own essential method (*manhaj*)}}, its authentic bases, and its distinctive means, and when we discuss it we must not use other {principles}/{{doctrines}} and theories to interpret it or add them to it, it is a complete {philosophy}/{{method (*manhaj*)}} and a harmonious unity, and the introduction of any foreign element into it is liable to ruin it—like a delicate and perfect mechanism which may be put out of operation by a single foreign piece {{—or to appear like an incongruous patch on it}}.

(¶19) In summary, this is the point I have to make, because many who have absorbed into their culture and thinking foreign pieces from the machinery of alien systems think they are giving Islam new strength when they graft these systems onto it, but this is a dangerous illusion which ruins Islam and makes its spirit inoperative. At the same time it betrays a hidden feeling of defeat even though they don't openly admit defeat.

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(¶20) The Islamic system is based on two fundamental ideas derived from its comprehensive {idea}/{{conception of divinity (*ulūhiyyah*),}} of the universe, life and mankind: the idea of the unity of

humanity in race, nature and origin { . . . }[3] and the idea that Islam is the {eternal}/{{general}} world-wide system {for the future of the human race}/{{and that God accepts no other system because He accepts no other religion than Islam, and religion—in the Islamic understanding—is the general system that governs life}}.

{(¶21) As for the idea of the unity of humanity in race, nature and origin { . . . } we have already discussed this when speaking of "the foundations of social justice in Islam"

{and have indicated that the rights that Islam extends to *dhimmis* and to idolaters who have a treaty with the Muslims stand on a purely human basis, there being no difference between the people of one religion and those of another, since the matter refers ultimately to common human factors. If Islam commanded its adherents to fight against the idolaters, this was only a defensive war to repel aggression. "Leave is given to those who fight because they were wronged—surely God is able to help them" (22:39/40)}. "Fight in the way of God with those who fight with you, but aggress not: God loves not the aggressor" (2:190/186). It is a war to repel material aggression against the Muslims so that they may not be seduced from their religion, and to remove the material obstacles from the path of the message (*daʿwa*), so that it may reach all people.

(¶22) In fulfilling its treaty obligations to non-Muslims Islam goes even to the extent of refraining from helping Muslims against non-Muslims with whom the Muslims have a treaty: "If they ask you for help, for religion's sake, it is your duty to help them, except against a people between whom and you there is a compact". (8:72). This is an ideal example of care to fulfill treaty obligations, based on a broad, world-wide view of humanity which transcends local interests and limits aims, even in matters connected with religion.}

(¶23) As for the idea that Islam is the {eternal}/{{general}} world-wide system {for the future of the human race}/{{and that God accepts no other system}}, it is derived from the fact that Muhammad

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[3] Three dots thus in the Arabic text, here and elsewhere as indicated.

{{—may God bless him and grant him peace—}} is the Apostle of God to all people and that he was the seal of the prophets, and that his religion is the soundest religion. "We have sent thee not, except to mankind entire" (34:28/27) . . . "We have not sent thee save as a mercy to all beings" (21:107) ". . . the Apostle of God and the seal of the prophets" (33:40) . . . "Today I have perfected your religion for you, and I have completed my blessing upon you, and I have approved Islam for your religion" (5:3/5) . . . "Surely this Qurʾan guides to the way that is soundest" (17:9).

{{(¶24) "Religion" in the Islamic understanding is synonymous with the word "system" (*niẓām*) in modern terminology, with the complete meaning of a creed in the heart, ethical principles in behaviour and law (*sharīʿah*) in society . . . All of this is contained in the understanding of the world "religion" in Islam. Therefore there cannot be a system that God accepts and Islam confirms unless it is this system derived from the doctrinal conception of Islam and represented in administrative systems and acts of legislation derived from the Islamic Shariʿah and from nothing else. The most important thing is that those who are part of this system fully recognise the divinity (*ulūhiyyah*) and supreme authority (*rubūbiyyah*) of God and do not arrogate to themselves the right to issue laws and regulations because this is the right of God alone in Islam. At this point the Islamic system diverges fundamentally from all human systems.}}

(¶25) But, even so, Islam does not compel others to embrace it, "No compulsion is there in religion {{; rectitude has become clear from error"}} (2:256/257), rather it grants them the fullest freedom and protection in conducting their religious rites, and has such a sensitive concern for this freedom that it imposes *zakāt* {{and *jihād*}} on Muslims only and in place of {this}/{{these}} takes *jizyah* from the *dhimmīs*, since they share with the Muslims the protection afforded by the Islamic state and thus they must all share in its expenses. But it does not make these expenses *zakat* for the dhimmis {{—as it does not impose participation in *jihad* upon them—unless they consent and accept,}} because *zakāt* is an Islamic obligation and a form of worship specifically for Muslims {{—and the same is the case with *jihād*—}} and it does not want to compel *dhimmis* to perform a specif-

ically Muslim act of worship, so it taxes them on a purely financial basis divesting it of the religious character found in the obligation of *zakāt*, and it excuses them from *jihād* in defense of the Abode of Islam, whose security and comfort they enjoy. This is the highest possible degree of sensitive concern for justice in dealing with others.

(¶26) In granting others their freedom to this extent, Islam is influenced by its general {{and universal}} spirit {of humanity} trusting that when they have the opportunity to examine Islam carefully without the interference of physical force or mental ignorance, their human nature will lead them to Islam, which achieves the perfect balance among all the goals that the previous religions aimed at and among all the tendencies and desires of human nature, guarantees to all absolute equality and complete solidarity, and aims to achieve human unity both in the realm of inward {feeling}/{{conception}} and in the realm of the outward social system.

(¶27) The fact that the Islamic system is based on these two ideas has had an effect on its nature and orientation, making it careful in its legislation and in its moral guidance, in its political and economic policy, and in the other systems that it includes, to legislate not for one race or one generation but for all nations and all generations. Thus it follows comprehensive human principles in all its legislation and administrative provisions, setting the general foundations for broad principles and leaving {{many of}} the applications to the development of time and the emergence of specific needs.

(¶28) This orientation toward general principles is clear in government, which is the specific concern of this chapter.

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{{(¶29) The theory of government in Islam is based on the testimony (*shahādah*) that there is no god but God, and when one confesses that divinity belongs to God alone he thereby confesses that sovereignty (*ḥākimiyyah*) in human life belongs to God alone; and God—may He be praised—exercises sovereignty in human life on one hand by directly controlling human affairs by His will and determination (*qadar*) and on the other hand by establishing the basic order of human life and human rights and duties and relationships and mutual obligations by His Shariʿah and His

programme (*manhaj*). In the Islamic system, nobody is associated with God, neither in His will and determination nor in His Sharīᶜah and programme (*manhaj*). Any other theory would be idolatry (*shirk*) and unbelief (*kufr*). Therefore, it is not possible for humans to set up systems of government with laws and ordinances on their own authority, for to do this is to reject the divinity of God and at the same time claim the characteristics of divinity for themselves, and this is clear unbelief (*kufr*).

(¶30) By this principle the Islamic system of government differs fundamentally from all systems of government and all social systems invented by mankind. This makes it unacceptable to mix the name of Islam with the names of human systems.}}

(¶31) Government in Islam is based {{, after acceptance of the sole divinity and sovereignty of God,}} on justice on the part of the rulers, obedience on the part of the ruled, {...} and consultation between rulers and ruled. {...} These are the basic lines from which branch out the other lines {{which trace the shape and form of government after the preceding principle has traced its essence and nature}}.

(¶32){{a}} Justice on the part of the rulers: "Surely God commands justice" (16:90/92) ... "When you judge between the people, judge with justice" (4:58/61) ..." "And when you speak be just, even if it should be to a near kinsman" (6:153) ... "Let not hatred for a people move you to be unjust; be just—that is nearer to godfearing" (5:8/11) ... "The most beloved of men to God on the Day of Resurrection and the one seated nearest him will be a just leader, and the most hated by God on the Day of Resurrection and the most severely punished will be a tyrannical leader". ({Hadīth}/{{The two Shaykhs[4] and al-Tirmidhī.)

(¶33) This is the absolute justice whose balance is untilted by love or hatred, whose principles are unchanged by affection or enmity, the justice that is unaffected by family relations between individuals or by hatred between nations, so that all members of the Islamic community (*ummah*) enjoy it irrespective of rank or ancestry, of

[4] I.e. Muslim and al-Bukhārī.

wealth or prestige, and other nations also enjoy it even if there is enmity between them and the Muslims. This is the pinnacle of justice which no international or domestic law has as yet acheived {{or even approached}}.

(¶34) Those who reject this will have to revert to the justice that strong nations mete out to weak ones, to the justice meted out between those who are at war with each other. They will have to revert to the justice the White men give the Red men {{and the Black men}} in the United States, the justice that the White give the Coloured in South Africa {...} {{, the justice that the Communists, the pagans, and the Crusaders give the Muslims in Russia, China, Yugoslavia, India, and Ethiopia,[5]}} and this is sufficient indication since these are contemporary conditions that everyone knows about.

(¶35) The important thing about the justice of Islam is that it has not been merely theories but has been applied in practical life, and actual historical experience records well attested examples of it,[6] the details of which will appear in the appropriate place since here we are concerned to present merely the Islamic {theories} {{principles}} as the authoritative texts show them.

(¶36) {{b}} Obedience on the part of the governed. "O believers, obey God and obey the Apostle and those in authority among you" (4:59/62). The fact that this verse groups together God, the Apostle, and those in authority (*ūlū al-amr*) tells us the nature and limits of this obedience. Obedience to one in authority is derived from obedience to God and the Apostle, because the one who holds authority in Islam is not obeyed for his own sake, but is obeyed only because he {{submits to the authority of God and recognises His sovereignty and then}} carries out the Shariᶜah of God and His Apostle, and it is from {{his recognition of God's sole sovereignty and then}} his execution of this Shariᶜah that his right to obedience is derived. If he departs from {it}/{{either one}} he is no longer entitled to obe-

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[5] Author's note: Refer to the chapter, "The Muslims are Fanatics" in the book *Islamic Studies*, by the author.

[6] Slightly different word order in 1st and 7th editions but no effect on the meaning.

dience, and his orders need not be carried out. The one {who brought the Shariᶜah says: "No obedience to the creature in disobedience to the Creater"}/{{to whom the prophetic mission was entrusted, may God bless him and grant him peace, says: "A Muslim must hear and obey whether he likes it or not, unless he is commanded to disobey God; in that case he must neither hear not obey" (The two Shaykhs),}} and he says, "Hear and obey, even if your governor is an Ethiopian slave with a head like a raisin, as long as he follows the Book of God Almighty". It is clear in this Hadith that hearing and obeying is conditional upon following the Book of God Almighty. {{(al-Bukhāri)}} So there is no absolute obedience to the {will}/{{commands}} of the ruler nor an obedience that continues even if he abandons the Shariᶜah of God and His Apostle.

{(¶37) "If someone sees a tyrannical authority who profanes what God had made sacred, violates the compact of God, disobeys the Sunnah of the Apostle of God, and acts with sin and enmity among the servants of God, and if he does not try to change him by deed or word, he shares his sins in God's sight". (Hadīth) This Hadith stipulates the duty of trying to change the ruler who is rebelling against the Shariᶜah, by action or at least by speech. This is a further positive step beyond the negative step of withholding obedience.}

(¶38) We must distinguish between the ruler's undertaking to enforce the religious Shariᶜah and his deriving his authority from {religion}/{{a religious characteristic inherent in his person}}. The ruler has no religious authority that he receives {{directly}} from heaven, as was the case with some rulers of ancient times {{in the kind of government called "theocracy"}}, but he becomes a ruler only by the absolutely free choice of the Muslims. They are not bound by any choice made by his predecessor,[7] nor is the position inherited within a family {...}, then after that his authority derives from his undertaking to enforce the Shariᶜah {{of God without claiming for himself any right to initiate legislation by an authority of his own}}. So, if the Muslims do not accept him he has no

[7] In the Umayyad and Abbasid dynasties (661–1258 C.E.) the reigning caliph commonly designated his successor.

authority, and if they do accept him but then he abandons the Shari-ᶜah of God, no obedience is due him.

(¶39) In this we see the wisdom of the prophet—may God bless him and grant him peace—in that he did not appoint his successor (*khalīfah*) after him. Had he done so it might have given grounds for thinking that the successor derived a {{personal}} religious authority from the fact that the prophet {{—may God bless him and grant him peace—}} had chosen him.

{{(¶40) Islam does not know any official "religious" body like the "clergy" of the Christian church. Islamic government is not something carried out by a specific official body; rather it is any form of government in which the Islamic Shariᶜah is enforced, and in which the ruler recognizes that sovereignty belongs to God alone and that his task is not to go beyond enforcing the Shariᶜah. If the meaning of "religious government" in any religion is that a particular group is the one to take charge of government, then religious government is completely rejected in Islam, and there is no excuse for anyone to understand that government in Islam requires anything more than enforcing the Islamic Shariᶜah, after the recognition that God alone—may He be praised—has the right of sovereignty.}}

{{(¶41) Every government that is based on the principle that God alone has sovereignty and then enforces the Islamic Shariᶜah is Islamic government, and every government that is not based on the recognition that God alone—may He be praised—has sovereignty and does not enforce this Shariᶜah, is not recognized by Islam, even if it is run by an official religious group or bears the name of Islamic.}}

{{(¶42) The obedience of the governed is to be given only if and as long as the ruler recognises that government belongs only to God and then enforces the Shariᶜah of God without any other condition than just government and obedience to God.}}

(¶43){{c}} Consultation between the rulers and the ruled: "Take counsel with them in the affair" (3:159/153) . . . "Their affair is counsel between them" (42:38/35). So, consultation (*shūrā*) is one of

the principles of government in Islam, {{and it involves more than merely government, because it is fundamental to the [whole] life of the Muslim community (*ummah*), as the verse shows}}. As for the manner of consulation, no particular system has been specified, and therefore its application is left to the circumstances and requirements [of particular situations]. The Apostle {{—may God bless him and grant him peace—}} used to consult with the Muslims on matters about which there was no revelation and accept their opinion on worldly matters in which they were more knowledgable than he, such as battle positions and strategies. He listened to their opinions at the battle of Badr and encamped some distance away from it. He also listened to their opinion on digging the trench [at the Battle of the Trench], and he listened to them in the matter of the prisoners, against the opinion of 'Umar, until a revelation came supporting ʿUmar. As for any thing on which there was a revelation, then in the nature of the case there was no scope for consultation, since such matters are religiously settled and fixed, {and were naturally reserved to the trustworthy Apostle}.

(¶44) Likewise the Caliphs used to consult the Muslims. Abu Bakr took consultation concerning those who withheld the *zakāt*, and then acted according to his view that they should be fought. At first ʿUmar opposed this, but then he accepted the view of Abu Bakr and was convinced by it, after God opened his mind to it and he saw that Abu Bakr was determined to do this. Abu Bakr also consulted the people of Mecca concerning the war in Syria, in spite of the opposition of ʿUmar. ʿUmar also took consultation over the question of entering a plague—striken country and came to an opinion; then he found a text from the Sunnah that supported him and so he kept to his course. This consultation did not follow any fixed or specifically marked system, because {the circumstances of the age required only this sort of consultation}/{{the practical circumstances determined who should be consulted (*ahl al-shūrā*) in each period so clearly that there was no uncertainty about it}}. In general there is ample space for various kinds of systems and methods which are not defined by Islam, as it is content to lay down the general principle [of consultation].

{{¶45) However, the Islamic movement in every period deter-

mines by its very nature who should be consulted (*ahl al-shūrā*) from among those with experience, prestige and good judgment, and it does so with an ease unknown in human systems.[8]}}

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(¶46) The ruler therefore has no rights that do not belong to an individual Muslim—except for obedience to his command, advice, and assistance in enforcing the Shariᶜah.

(¶47) Although the Prophet—may God bless him and grant him peace—was not only a ruler but also the one who brought the Shariᶜah and set the legal limits for the ruler within the sphere of the rights that Islam gives him, and his Successors (*khulafāʾ*) followed his prescriptions, as we shall see in the chapter on the historical reality [of Islam], he allowed people to take retribution from him when they had the right to it, unless they choose to forgive him. Once a creditor came to him and spoke harshly to him, and the Muslims became very upset, but he indicated that they should leave [the man] alone, since anyone with a case has the right to speak". {Camels carrying donations (*sadaqah*) passed by him and he stretched out his hand to a piece of cloth on one of the camels and said, "I have no more right to this piece of cloth than any other of the Muslims".}/{{He also said—may God bless him and grant him peace—I have a right to only one-fifth of your booty, and that fifth is expended on you. (Abū Daʾūd and al-Nisāʾī)}}

(¶48) {{He said to his tribe and his relatives, "O Tribe of the Quraysh, you must purchase your own souls [by your good deeds]; I am no avail to you in God's presence. Oh ᶜAbbās ibn ᶜAbd al-Muṭṭalib (his uncle), I am of no avail to you in God's presence. O Ṣafiyyah, aunt of the Apostle of God, I am of no avail to you in God's presence. O Fāṭimah, daughter of Muhammad, ask for whatever you wish of my possessions, but I am of no avail to you in the presence of God". (Agreed upon)}} He said to ᶜAli and Fāṭimah {—his closest relatives}/{{, the most beloved of people to him,}} "I cannot give to you and leave the poor members of the

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[8] Author's note: Details in the chapter "A Society of *Shūrā*" in the book *Toward an Islamic Society*.

community (*Ahl al-Ṣuffah*) with their bellies wracked by hunger''. {He used to say to the Banu Hashim (his own clan): ''If people cannot [get special favours from][9] me by virtue of their [good] deeds, can you [get them] by virtue of your ancestry?} {{and on [another] occasion he said to them, ''I cannot serve you and leave the poor (*Ahl al-Ṣuffah*) hungry''. (Hadith number 596 from the Musnad, published by Professor Aḥmad Muḥammad Šākir) He also said ''Among the People of Israel the practice was that when one of their nobility stole they would not punish him, but if one of the lower class (*lit*: weak) stole, they would cut off his hand. If Fāṭimah were to steal, I would cut off her hand''. (Many narrators)}}

(¶49) Thus the ruler has no legal or financial rights beyond those of the ordinary Muslims, nor does his family, {and that is Islam}.

(¶50) No ruler may oppress people in either body or spirit, nor may he disrespect them, nor infringe on their possessions. If he enforces the punishments and obligations [of the Shariᶜah], that is the limit of his authority over people, and God protects them from his authority [beyond that], in their bodies, spirits, honor, and possessions.

(¶51) Islam has safeguarded their bodies and spirits, honour and possessions by clear general commands, in such a form as to leave no doubt as to its concern to assure security, peace, and honour to all.

(¶52) ''O believers, do not enter houses other than your own houses until you first ask leave and greet the people thereof'' (24:27) {. . .} and ''it is not piety to come to houses from behind'' (2:189/185) . . . and ''Enter houses by their doors'' (2:189/185).} . . . and, ''Do not spy'' (49:12) and {the Hadith}: ''The blood, honour, property of every Muslim is forbidden to every other Muslim'' {(Hadīth)}/{{(The two Shaykhs)}} . . . and a life for a life . . . and retaliation for wounds.

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(¶53) But while Islam limits the authority of the {ruler}/{{leader

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[9] *Lit*: ''If people cannot come to me . . .''

(*imām*)}} in matters concerning his person, it gives him the broadest possible authority in looking after the welfare of the community in those matters concerning which there is no authoritative text (*naṣṣ*) and which evolve with the evolving times and conditions. The general principle is that {"the Sultan}/{{the Muslim leader (*imām*) whose authority is based on the Shari'ah of God}} may make as many new decrees as he finds new problems {"} in order to carry out God's statement,, "He has laid on you no impediment in your religion" (22:78) {and the statement of the Apostle "No injury, and no retaliation"}, and in order to achieve the general goals of Islam in improving the condition of the individual and of the group and of all humanity, within the bounds established in Islam and on the condition of justice, which must characterize the leader (*imām*).

(¶54) The {ruler (*sulṭān*)}/{{leader (*imām*)}} must put an end to whatever causes any sort of harm to the community and he must undertake whatever brings benefit to the community, as long as he does not violate any of the authoritative religious texts (*naṣṣ*).

(¶55) These are wide powers which cover all aspects of life. The achievement of social justice in all its forms is included within these powers. In the financial area, for example, the ruler may go beyond the obligation of *zakāt* and impose other taxes in order to acheive the proper balance and equilibrium, to eliminate ill-feeling and resentment, and to relieve the community of the evils of extreme luxury and hardship, and {of the evil of inflation . . . along with all other considerations that justify initiative on the part of the ruler}/. {{of the accumulation of money on the hands of a few people, provided that the he does not go against an authoritative text or a basic principle of Islamic life. For he may not strip people of all their possessions and leave them poor, or take control of their whole livelihood so that he can abase them and make them his slaves, thus depriving them of the ability to carry out their obligation to speak freely in advising him, to keep an alert watch over his actions, and to change whatever is objectionable whatever its source. Individuals cannot do this unless they have private sources of income which the leader (*imām*) and his deputies do not control. The necks of slaves must bow to the one who owns their sources of income!}}

(¶56) The actual history of the Islamic community includes many examples of this care for the broad welfare [of the community], {which may be applied at any time. Detailed examples will be given in the appropriate place. The important thing is to affirm here that Islam is not a rigid system, and its application is not limited to any one age or one environment.}/{{without forsaking the basic principles of Islamic life that we have indicated. It may be applied at any time, since Islam is not a rigidified system and its detailed application is not limited to any one age or one environment. Islam only wants to affirm the basic Islamic principles whose features are defined by God, to keep Muslim society from losing its identity in the midst of (*lit*: melting into) the Jāhilī societies, and to preserve its ability to lead these societies, which it came to lead.}}

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(¶57) So far we have dealt with the "legal" aspect of government in Islam, but beyond this is the "voluntary" aspect in which moral guidance goes beyond what the legislation requires, after the manner of Islam in all its requirements and systems. {It legislates the minimum requirements but seeks higher achievements by moral guidance, and it leaves a wide space between these levels in which man may rise as high as he can.}

(¶58) Thus government in Islam is based more on conscience than on legislation. It is based on the fact that God is present at every moment with both the ruler and the ruled, watching over both. "Any servant to whom God puts in charge of a flock, if he fails to guide it well, he will never see a trace of Paradise". {(Hadīth)}/{{(The two Shaykhs)}} ... "Consume not your goods between you in vanity; neither proffer it to the judges, that you may sinfully consume a portion of other men's goods, and that wittingly" (2:188/184).

(¶59) The shepherd and the flock both require the supervision of God in all that they do, and it is the fear of God that is the final guarantee of the establishment of justice. We have already seen that Islam entrusts to the properly trained human conscience great responsibilities in matters of both law and economics. If there is no fear of God in that conscience then there is no guarantee, for the law

can always be twisted or evaded, and the ruler, the judge and the people can be deceived.

{{(¶60) One is not to undertand from this that the Islamic social system is based upon conscience alone, but what must be understood is that Islam has another guarantee besides that of mere legislation, and this gives it an advantage—in terms of actual accomplishment—over systems that rely only on legislation, without support from the conscience or the feelings.}}

(¶61) We shall see later that this conscience that Islam fosters and trains has accomplished momentous things that seem like miracles, in the life of the Muslims down through the ages.